

mottled with dusky, and the brown spot behind the ear-coverts is very distinct. Wing 13.

983. *GELOCHELIDON ANGLICUS*.

Very common.

985. *SEENA AURANTIA*.

Very common.

989. *THALASSEUS* ———.

At Balacherry, on the Gulf of Kuchli, I frequently noticed a sea-Tern, which I believe to have been *Th. bengalensis*, but which may have been the larger species. I never obtained a specimen.

1004. *PELECANUS* ———.

Pelicans, both grey and white, are not uncommon both on the coast and on the large inland lakes, but they take good care to keep out of shot.

1005. *GRACULUS CARBO*.

Common on the Null.

1008. *PLOTUS MELANOGASTER*.

Common.

XLVI.—*Letters, Announcements, &c.*

The following letters, addressed “To the Editor of ‘The Ibis,’” have been received:—

SIR,—In the ‘Proceedings’ of the Zoological Society for 1865, p. 823, I described the Harrier of New Caledonia under the name of “*Circus wolfe*.” Since that time some eminent ornithologists have expressed the opinion that this Harrier is not really distinct from *C. gouldi* of Australia and New Zealand; I am therefore desirous of calling attention to a recent corroboration of my view as to the specific distinctness of these two Harriers, which will be found in page 16 of the introduction to Mr. Buller’s valuable ‘History of the Birds of New Zealand.’

Mr. Buller and I carefully compared the adult males of *C. wolfi* and *C. gouldi*, and were both convinced that the two species are quite distinct.

Mr. Buller writes respecting *C. wolfi*, "it appears to me to be readily distinguishable from our bird (*C. gouldi*) by its blackish crown and ear-coverts, and likewise by the much darker colour of its wing-coverts."

I may add that *C. wolfi* is equally distinct from *C. spilonotus*, to which Professor Schlegel was disposed to refer it, but which I have never seen from any locality south of Singapore.

I am yours, &c.

J. H. GURNEY.

Northrepps, Norwich,
August 11, 1873.

SIR,—In 'The Ibis' for 1870, p. 67, Messrs. Elwes and Buckley quote a letter written by me in which I express an opinion that two Eagles obtained by those gentlemen from M. Alléon, who procured them during their northward vernal migration near the Bosphorus, were specimens of *Aquila nævioides* in an unusually dark phase of plumage.

I was confirmed in this opinion by finding in one of these specimens two small particoloured scapular feathers, which appeared to me to indicate that the bird was commencing the assumption of the particoloured plumage which always distinguishes adult South-African specimens of *Aquila nævioides*, and in which the great majority of the feathers are coloured partly rufous and partly purplish brown, the two tints being both present and sharply defined and contrasted on the same feather.

This specimen is now in the hands of Mr. W. E. Brooks, of Assensole, Bengal, who has been so good as to inform me that it is identical with the Indian *Aquila bifasciata* in fully adult plumage—a stage in which *A. bifasciata* was unknown to me until I became acquainted with it from the result of Mr. Brooks's zealous investigations in India.

Mr. Brooks has further been so good as to me send two small particoloured feathers, plucked from a specimen of *Aquila bi-*

fasciata shot at Futtchgurh, in Northern India, by Mr. A. Anderson, which closely resemble the particoloured feathers of *Aquila nævioides*, and prove that this phase of plumage also occurs in *A. bifasciata*, though, I apprehend, only occasionally, and not as the invariable form of adult dress, which it is in the case of South-African specimens of *A. nævioides*. Under these circumstances I have now no doubt that I was wrong in considering the two Eagles brought from the Bosphorus to be dark specimens of *Aquila nævioides*.

Mr. H. E. Dresser, in a paper recently communicated to the Zoological Society, stated that he has lately examined one of the Bosphorus Eagles procured from that locality by Capt. Elwes, and considered it to be "an adult or, rather, a very old specimen of *Aquila orientalis*."

Mr. Brooks, however, as already mentioned, positively identifies the Bosphorus Eagle in his possession with *Aquila bifasciata*.

Are then *A. orientalis* and *A. bifasciata* one and the same species? I can hardly think so, as, though undoubtedly very nearly related, the specimens of *A. orientalis* which I have examined are *on the average* smaller and darker birds than the examples of *A. bifasciata* which have come under my notice.

This being the case, I concur with Mr. Dresser in the opinion which he has expressed in the paper above referred to, that the question of the identity or otherwise of *A. orientalis* and *A. bifasciata* must remain an open one till a larger number of specimens (and especially immature specimens of *A. orientalis*) have been obtained for comparison than we have at present access to for that purpose.

I am yours, &c.

J. H. GURNEY.

Chefo, 30th April, 1873.

Sir,—I have a few more words to say of my doings in ornithology at Shanghai. I did not leave Shanghai till the 23rd of April, and so had several more opportunities of visiting the market since I last wrote*. On the 14th I procured

* Vide *suprà*, p. 364.

another male Post-horse Dotterel (*Eudromias veredus*, Gould), in more advanced plumage than the last, with the crown of its head changing also into white; so I really believe, as I imagined from a view of a specimen in Père David's museum at Pekin (v. P. Z. S. 1870, p. 430), that in the fully mature summer plumage the male has the whole head white. On the 19th I got a pair of the same species. The female was much less developed in change of dress. Her upper plumage was all bordered with buff, like that of a young bird; and her breast was olive-brown moulting into chestnut, many feathers broadly margined with yellowish grey, the black line below the breast-band showing not very conspicuously. She had longer wings than any of the three males procured, and longer tarsi.

The 16th April was a day of great luck for me. Baskets on baskets of Knots (*Tringa canutus*, L.), Chinese Knots (*T. crassirostris*, T. & S.), and Tip-tilted* Godwits (*Limosa uropygialis*, Gould) filled every dealer's shop; and among these there was great choice of specimens. The first were for the most part in summer plumage, the females being larger than the males. The second were in summer dress on the underparts; but the upper feathers were only reddened here and there. Of these the females were a good deal larger than the males. Of the Godwits, the small-sized birds, or males, were nearly all in summer plumage; but I could not find the large long-billed female in any dress more advanced than the zigzag-banded intermediate style; plenty of them were still in winter costume. A basket of little birds was then shown me; and from among a number of the Common and Broad-billed Stints I was delighted to pick out a pair of Tip-tilted Sandpipers, two male Curlew Stints, several Australian Stints (*Tringa acuminata*, Horsf.), two Mongolian Sand-Plovers, and, best joy of all two *Spoonbill Stints*! The Broad-bills (*Tringa platyrhyncha*, Temm.) were some in winter and some in summer costume, and some in intermediate. I could distinguish no constant difference in size between the sexes. The Tiptilted Sandpipers (*Terekia cinerea*) were in summer

* Thanks to the Poet Laureate for this much-wanted adjective.

dress, and showed no difference between the sexes (determined by dissection). I took down the following details from the fresh male :—

Terekia cinerea, ♂. Length 9·5 inches. Wing 5·15, reaching to end of tail; first quill longest, ·3 longer than tip of tertiaries. Tail 2·2, of twelve slightly graduated feathers, outer ·25 shorter than centrals. Feet, stretched backwards, slightly exceeding tail, say by ·2. Bare part of tibia ·75; tarsus 1·15; middle toe ·85, its claw ·2. Legs orange clay-colour. Bill recurved, from forehead to tip 1·9, from gape 2·05; yellowish olive-brown at base and rictus, blackish brown on the rest.

Dissection. Intestine thick, 11 inches long; cæcoid appendage 5 inches from anus, ·5 long, and curled inwards at tip; cæca ·75 from anus, 1·6 long. Stomach an irregular oval 1 long by ·6 broad. Epithelium firmly fixed, containing dry mud and bits of small black beetles.

The two Curlew Stints (*Tringa subarcuata*) were both males and only partially moulted. The Australian Stints were all males in summer plumage.

The two Mongolian Plovers, *Ægialites mongolus* (Pall.), were also both males: one was just beginning to acquire the summer dress; the other retained its winter peculiarities.

Of the two Pigmy Spoonbills, one is in winter plumage, the other commencing to blush into its summer redness. Both proved males. I took the following note from them while fresh :—

Eurynorhynchus pygmaeus, ♂. Length $6\frac{1}{4}$ inches. Wing 3·85, not exceeding tail; first quill little longer than the second, exceeding the tertiaries by ·2. Tail 1·75; outer rectrix ·2 longer than second and third, ·1 longer than fourth and fifth, ·15 shorter than centrals; thus is the tail doubly forked. Bare part of tibia ·55; tarsus ·85; middle toe ·71, its claw ·15; all olive-black. Bill from forehead ·90, also olive-black.

Dissection. Bones of the head soft and easily broken. Trachea simple. Stomach circular, flattish at sides, about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch broad. Epithelium thick and loose, containing fragments of

small bivalve shells and two entire minute univalves. Intestine thick and whitish, narrower near rectum, 10·5 inches long; cæcoid appendage 4·75 from anus, ·3 long, ·1 thick; cæca ·75 from anus, 1·2 long, bulging towards ends, and ending in a point.

These birds were perfect strangers to the marketmen; and they had no name for them.

On the 17th I noticed a few of the eastern Little Stint (*T. salina*, Pall.), and of Temminck's Stint (*T. temmincki*); but these are too small to meet much attention from the pot-suppliers. Spring Snipe (*Gallinago megala*, mihi) were just arriving from the south, and mixed with them a few Pin-tailed Snipes (*G. horsfieldi*, Gray). I had hunted in vain for this last species before. The only Snipe obtainable during winter about Shanghai is the common *G. scolopacina*. The Pin-tail does not appear to remain in that neighbourhood, as it does about Amoy, Canton, and in Formosa.

On the 18th I found a solitary Pigmy Curlew (*Numenius minutus*, Gould); and almost every day afterwards there were one or two in the market. I took notes on the first male.

Numenius minutus, ♂. Length 12·5 inches. Wing 7·5, ·13 longer than tail, ·85 longer than tertiaries; first quill longest. Tail 3·2, ·6 longer than under tail-coverts, 1·2 longer than upper tail-coverts; outer rectrix ·3 shorter than centrals. Bare part of tibia 1 inch; tarse 2·23, middle toe 1·3; its claw ·2; colour light yellowish grey, dark on joints of toes, claws black. Bill from forehead 1·88, from gape 2·18, curved downwards, fleshy buff on basal two thirds, blackish brown on apical third and on culmen.

Dissection. Male with small testes. Intestine thick, ·19 inch long; cæca 1 inch from anus, ·75 and ·65 long, ·15 thick, and pointed; cæcoid appendage 8·5 inches from anus, ·5 long, and pointed. Gizzard oval, with very strong lateral tendons, 1·15 long by ·9 broad; epithelium thick, containing fragments of shells and some rice-like seeds.

I got two more males, one the same size as the above, the other smaller, with shorter legs and toes. No females were brought.

With the small Curlew a few of the eastern Black-tailed Godwit, *Limosa brevipes*, came in. These were all males, and in nearly full summer plumage.

The Eastern Golden Plovers (*Charadrius fulvus*) were now frequent. I give the measurements of a fresh male in nearly complete summer dress :—

Charadrius fulvus, ♂. Length 9·5 inches. Wing 6·5, exceeding tail by ·5; tip of wing ·85 beyond tertiaries, first quill longest. Tail 2·6, of twelve slightly graduated feathers; the two centrals longest by ·2. Bare part of tibia ·7; tarse 1·78; middle toe 1·3, its claw ·18. The legs stretched backwards reach beyond the tail 1·3. Beak from forehead ·9, from gape 1·1.

One bird I was constantly on the look-out for but never found—to wit, the Eastern Grey Snipe, *Pseudoscolopax semi-palmatus*, Blyth.

Yours, &c.

R. SWINHOE.

Wellington, N. Z., 1st July, 1873.

SIR,—In the introduction to Dr. Buller's 'Birds of New Zealand' a specimen of *Tribonyx mortieri* is mentioned as having been brought from New Zealand by Mr. Bills, which bird Mr. Bills stated was captured near Lake Waihora, in Otago. On reading this I remembered that I had seen a specimen of *Tribonyx mortieri* in the gardens of the Otago Acclimatization Society shortly before Mr. Bills left New Zealand; and suspecting that this was the bird that Mr. Bills took home, I wrote to Mr. A. C. Purdie, Curator of the Otago museum, and asked him to find out for me the history of this bird. The following is an extract from his answer :—

"The Rail (*Tribonyx mortieri*) that you say is described by Dr. Buller as from New Zealand, is the same that you saw in the Society's gardens. It was brought from Hobarton by Mr. Clifford, and was presented to the Society by Sir Morton Allport, of Hobarton, when Mr. Clifford was there

on a visit. *This was the only bird of the kind taken home by Mr. Bills last year.*

"How Mr. Bills could think of stating that the bird had been caught on the shores of any lake in New Zealand, he can best explain, as I have no doubt that he knew its whole history."

I remain, &c. &c.,

F. W. HUTTON.

The following extracts are from letters received from our Editor:—

"Guatemala, 20th June.

"Since we arrived here I have had no opportunities of collecting birds, as Guatemala lies in the middle of an open plain, and we have not yet secured horses so as to be able to make excursions. The only bird-work I have done has been overhauling a small museum kept by the Sociedad Economica de Guatemala, and where they are trying to make a collection of all the natural-history products of this country. The leading spirit is Don Juan Rodriguez, who has done some good work for foreign collectors of Coleoptera, and who is a very excellent fellow. Of course the society have a good deal to do before they can boast of any thing like a complete collection of birds; but I found a few interesting species in their cases. They have a *Dendroeca* I believe to be Coues's *D. gracia*, which I never obtained myself, and a specimen of *Threnetes ruckeri*, also new to Guatemala. I saw also a mottled specimen of *Buteo albonotatus*.

"I have had no time yet to look up any of my old shooting-places at Ducñas; but I hear that considerable changes have taken place, and that a large amount of land has been put under cultivation. The slopes of the Volcan de Fuego, which in former times were all brushwood, are now cultivated for corn crops. The upper forests remain much the same, so far as I could see. However, I hope to look them up shortly."

"Guatemala, August 5th.

+ "Two days ago I got several specimens of *Panyptila mela-*

noleuca from the old place. *Oreophasis* has turned up in Vera Paz. I have seen several skins from there, but have not yet ascertained exactly where they were shot."

Publications received.—Mr. Claude M. Wyatt sends us the ornithological portion of the 'Report of the Ordnance Survey of the Peninsula of Sinai,' which contains short notes on the species of birds met with by Mr. Wyatt and other recent observers. Several of Mr. Tristram's recent novelties were obtained, *e.g.* *Sylvia deserti*, *Drymæca eremita*, and *Amydrus tristrami*. The list will be useful for local reference. Six large lithographic plates (uncoloured) give illustrations of some of the rarer species.

Dr. A. M. Ross forwards the first number of the 'Canadian Ornithologist' (Toronto, 1873), a new monthly record of information concerning Canadian ornithology, of which he is Editor.

Dr. O. Larcher, of Paris, sends the first fascicle of a new serial entitled 'Mélanges de Pathologie Comparée et de Tératologie,' which contains several articles relating to the pathological anatomy of birds—a branch of the subject not hitherto much studied.

From Baron Droste we have received the Report of the 19th meeting of the German Ornithologists' Association*, which took place at Cassel in May of last year. Here will be found much to interest students of the Palæarctic ornis.

Hr. F. Leybold has lately published at Santiago, Chili, a very interesting account of a month's excursion from that city over the Andes into the Argentine Republic†, and has been kind enough to send a copy to the Acting Editor of this journal. Many notes are introduced respecting the birds observed and obtained. Not only this, but descriptions of two

* Bericht über die Versammlung der Deutschen Ornithologen-Gesellschaft zu Cassel abgehalten am 23. und 24. Mai 1872. Herausgegeben von dem Geschäftsführer der Gesellschaft Ferd. Baron Droste und dessen Stellvertreter Dr. Bernhard Borggreve. Münster: 98 pp. 8vo.

† Escursion a las Pampas Argentinas. Hojas de mi diario. Por Federico Leybold. Santiago: 1873. 108 pp. 8vo.

new species are given, proposed to be called *Columbina auri-squamata* and *Conurus glaucifrons*. The latter, Dr. Finsch informs us, is *Conurus acuticaudatus*, Vieillot. The former remains yet to be recognized in Europe.

We have likewise received copies of a reprint of Mr. Blackwall's 'Researches in Zoology' (London, 1873), presented by the author, and of the 'Report of the Commissioner of Agriculture for the year 1871,' presented by the Department of Agriculture of the U. S. A.

Some remarkable additions have recently been made to our knowledge of the extinct forms of bird-life. Not to speak of the completion of Prof. A. Milne-Edwards's 'Ornithologie Fossile,' which has made us acquainted with so many new genera of fossil birds, Prof. Owen has recently published in the 'Transactions' of the Zoological Society the description of an Australian Struthious form allied to *Dromæus* (*Dromornis australis**), and has communicated to the Geological Society† that of a still more wonderful ornithic type provided with teeth (*Odontopteryx tolpiacus*), founded upon a skull exhumed from the Sheppey clay. As a pendant to the latter, Prof. Marsh has lately‡ described a new "subclass of fossil birds" (ODONTORNITHES), founded on two "dentigerous" forms from the upper cretaceous shale of Kansas—*Ichthyornis dispar* and *Apatornis celer*. Lastly a new gigantic fossil egg has been discovered in Southern Russia, and its unknown producer called *Struthiolithus chersonensis*§ by Dr. A. Brandt.

* Trans. Zool. Soc. viii. p. 381.

† See 'Nature,' July 10th (p. 215).

‡ Am. Journ. of Science and Art, vol. v.

§ Bull. Ac. Sc. St. Pétersbourg, xviii. p. 159.